

DON'T DESTROY Fla Bay's GOOD WATER

Deep Well Injection

Use Nature's Way!

New Everglades plan calls for flushing water in wells deep underground

By Jenny Staletovich

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BAD IDEA - 150 DEEP INJECTION WELLS

A new plan is emerging in the political calculus over Everglades restoration: Rather than store, treat and move water into South Florida's parched Everglades, water managers are now considering flushing millions of gallons deep underground near Lake Okeechobee.

The deep injection wells would help control the level of water in the lake during the rainy season, protect its aging dike and help eliminate the need to flush dirty lake water to either coast, which last year outraged residents and business owners when it triggered smelly toxic blooms and killed fish. But environmentalists say it would do nothing to help fix the south end of the Everglades and instead waste valuable water that original restoration plans called for saving.

If we inject that water underground, we only take care of half the problem.

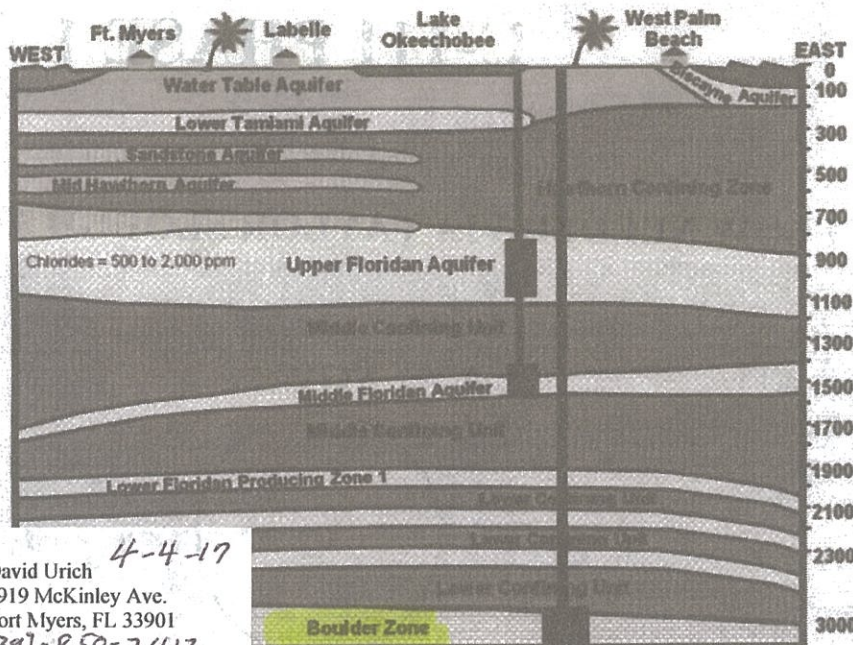
Audubon Florida scientist Paul Gray

"If we inject that water underground, we only take care of half the problem," said Audubon Florida scientist Paul Gray. "The scale that we're talking about here has never been contemplated or done before. ... We're talking something very untested."

They also worry the plan is meant to undermine a push to build a massive reservoir south of the lake backed by Republican Senate President Joe Negron, whose hometown has been hammered by the lake releases, but opposed by powerful sugar farmers.

At a meeting Wednesday, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which is in the midst of mapping out fixes for the Lake Okeechobee watershed, provided an update on alternatives in a planning process expected to take three years. While solving the water storage problem relies heavily on building a series of reservoirs around the lake - which originally provided much of the freshwater flowing south into South Florida - the plans also call for constructing wells that store and recover water as well as the injection wells that dump water in the boulder zone beneath the Florida aquifer.

The Everglades may be in trouble, wilted by decades of flood control and facing growing risk from sea rise driven by climate change. If freshwater is not restored soon, there is a fear the region will begin a self-replicating cycle of decline.



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DEEP WELL IDEA VERY UNTESTED

Fla Bay Too SALTY

We Just Spent some
\$20 MILLION on
C-111 Spreader,
The Headwaters of
Fla Bay FEEDS from
Taylor Slough

Graphic courtesy South Florida Water Management District.

He said people always want to know how efficient ASR wells will be, since freshwater is pumped into the brackish water of the aquifer. The Kissimmee ASR pilot project had 100 percent recovery, Mr. Verrastro said. He said the Floridan aquifer water is fairly fresh, so they did not have a problem with the freshwater mixing with brackish water found in some ASR projects in other areas.

"Those same conditions pretty much apply throughout the Lake Okeechobee area," he said.

"The water we pump into an ASR well has to go through a filtration and treatment process," he said. "It has to meet drinking water standards, which we were able to do."

"At the Kissimmee ASR system, we found that we are using very lightly treated surface water, it is very stable water," he said.

"Both ASR technology and deep water injection look very promising in our planning process to reduce discharges to the northern estuaries," said Matt Morrison, federal policy chief.

"We're getting one management measure, and that is above ground storage.

If we are really going to reduce the damaging discharges to the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie estuaries, we need storage," said Mr. Morrison.

"We know we need storage north of the lake. We need storage south of the lake. We know we need storage east and west of the lake.

"The good news is we have construction of storage currently taking place on both the Caloosahatchee and the St. Lucie and the Central Everglades Planning Project, which

includes storage south of the lake, was recently approved by Congress for upcoming implementation.

He said about 700,000 acre feet of storage is needed north of the lake.

LOWP project performance measures include:

- * Increase water storage capacity in the watershed increasing improved Lake Okeechobee water levels, and reducing the damaging high water levels;
- * Improving the quantity and timing of discharges to the St. Lucie and the Caloosahatchee estuaries which adversely affect salinity;
- * Creating habitat to increase extent and functionality of freshwater wetlands; and,
- * Improve water supply for existing legal users.

Components of LOWP includes above ground reservoirs, ASR, deep well injection and wetland and flood plain restoration. Areas currently under evaluation for reservoirs are west of the Kissimmee River.

Options considered are reservoirs to provide 150,000 acre feet to 300,000 acre feet of above ground storage.

He presented documentation which showed a combination of 250,000 acre foot reservoir and 80 ASRs and 150 deep injection wells could reduce the estuary flows by 82 percent.

Total cost for that option is estimated at \$3.7 billion.

"We're going to continue to move forward and develop a project plan north of the lake that is going to really help minimize those damaging discharges from Lake Okeechobee that contribute to undesirable conditions in both the St. Lucie and the Caloosahatchee."

"I appreciate this presentation today, as well as the outstanding research of our engineers and hydrologists," said WRAC Chairman Jim Moran. "Multi-faceted storage north of Lake Okeechobee provides a cost-effective, flexible strategy to meet environmental and water supply goals in South Florida."